

WASH Cash Transfer Programming in Gaza – challenges and opportunities



Rethinking traditional responses:

An overview of WASH/market based programming

Oxfam recognises all humanitarian responses need to be aware of markets, and use them when possible. Markets are relevant for appropriateness and cost effectiveness.

- Haiti: water market survey – July 2010
- Jijiga, Ethiopia: water EMMA – February 2012
- Wajir, Kenya: water EMMA – September 2012
- Uvira, DRC: chlorine (under discussion)
- Amman – water market: September 2013

Oxfam's WASH programming in Gaza

Water situation:

- Water from vendors is under-regulated and unsafe.
- A rapid assessment by WASH partners in August 2011 estimated that > 890,000 people consume poor quality water supplies, many from private vendors.
- 76% of those surveyed were consuming either chemically, biologically or physically contaminated water at HH level.

Oxfam's response:

- In consultation with the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) a pilot project using water vouchers was set up (696 HH) as part of a holistic approach to address the issue.



Programme overview

GOAL	Objectives	Indicators	Targeting	Vouchers	Period
To reduce the humanitarian impact of the blockade on vulnerable households in Gaza	To assist vulnerable households in Gaza in meeting their water/sanitation needs Targeted men, women and children are less vulnerable to water and sanitation related illness	A average of 20% reduction in water/sanitation-related illnesses is reported in children within 100% of public health beneficiary households. By end of project, 80% of 500 beneficiaries of the water voucher scheme have access to drinking water free from fecal contamination	3 communities: AL MALALHA AL MOGRAGHA AL ZARGA 500 Household planned (696 Household reached)	Vouchers of 200 or 500 litres of safe drinking water Number of vouchers depending of the family size Distributed every month Distribution 3 days per week	5 months (December to April)



OGB & YEC facilitated electing a new local committee for transparency and to reinvigorate local CBOs.

Local committees were involved at different phases of project



Targeting

Targeting proved to be a time consuming process (6 weeks)

Challenges were:

- 1) explaining targeting criteria to CBOs as they were not involved in the original project design,
- 2) politics of targeting in one of the area, and
- 3) lack of census in Bedouin communities particularly.

LESSON LEARNED: importance of good needs assessments and appropriate objectives, including the target group and targeting methodology to reduce errors.

Voucher distribution process

- Serial numbers for each household
- Truckers had list with numbers matching head of household's ID
- Value of vouchers demanded both market and beneficiary monitoring to understand how long vouchers lasted
- 84% of the beneficiaries were satisfied with amount they received, although they wanted an increase during summer
- Intensive monitoring and financial accounting due to novelty of vouchers and low level technologies used to distribute and reimburse vouchers:
 - Vouchers were distributed manually and once redeemed, manually counted multiple times.
 - Discussions were held between to introduce electronic cards, as in food voucher programmes, but this was not done finally.

Lessons Learned

Need to improve vulnerability criteria for following reasons:

- No common vulnerability criteria exists across the WASH humanitarian sector.
- Economic factors were not fully integrated in assessment and baseline study.
- Only 2 local companies (providers) were selected, meaning there was little choice for beneficiaries.
- Community water resellers pulled out, their potential support would have made vouchers scheme more sustainable.
- Recommendation was made to conduct a **Water EMMA** to investigate market system in more detail.

Water market EMMA:

Key Findings and Lessons for Voucher Programme

Water EMMA took place in October 2013. Key points:

- Need to increase water storage capacity at HH level, especially in under-served neighbourhoods.
- Neighbourhood-based water safety plans can provide a focus on link between consumers and tanker drivers to define acceptable levels of affordability, quality, and water safety.
- Supporting independent water tanker drivers whose income depends on regular service delivery throughout year.
- Further study is needed to determine the nature of support (fuel vouchers? disinfectant materials and technologies? Etc.)

Can the private water sector meet the needs of poor and very poor communities during conflicts?

Where are there incentives in the market chain to produce and sell better quality water?

What are potential *response activities* to help markets and people get better access to water?

Conclusions and Recommendations for Urban Water Voucher Programmes

- Despite insecurity in November 2012, 50% of tanker drivers continued to deliver water throughout the Gaza Strip.
- Commercial water sector in Gaza can continue to meet demand for drinking water during short term crisis, provided:
 - Critical infrastructure is not damaged/destroyed by military activities
 - supplies of diesel fuel for trucks and generators are available
- Poor and very poor households use higher risk water sources during crisis periods resulting in possible increased public health risks.
- Consumers resist buying chlorinated water (smell & taste), if the chlorine dosage is > 0.5 mg/l
- In absence of effective regulatory agencies in Gaza, the only actors actively promoting better quality standards are NGOs, UN agencies, and charitable organizations.